

THE BOSTON FLOATING HOSPITAL, SEASON OF 1906

BY JOSEPHINE HALBERSTADT

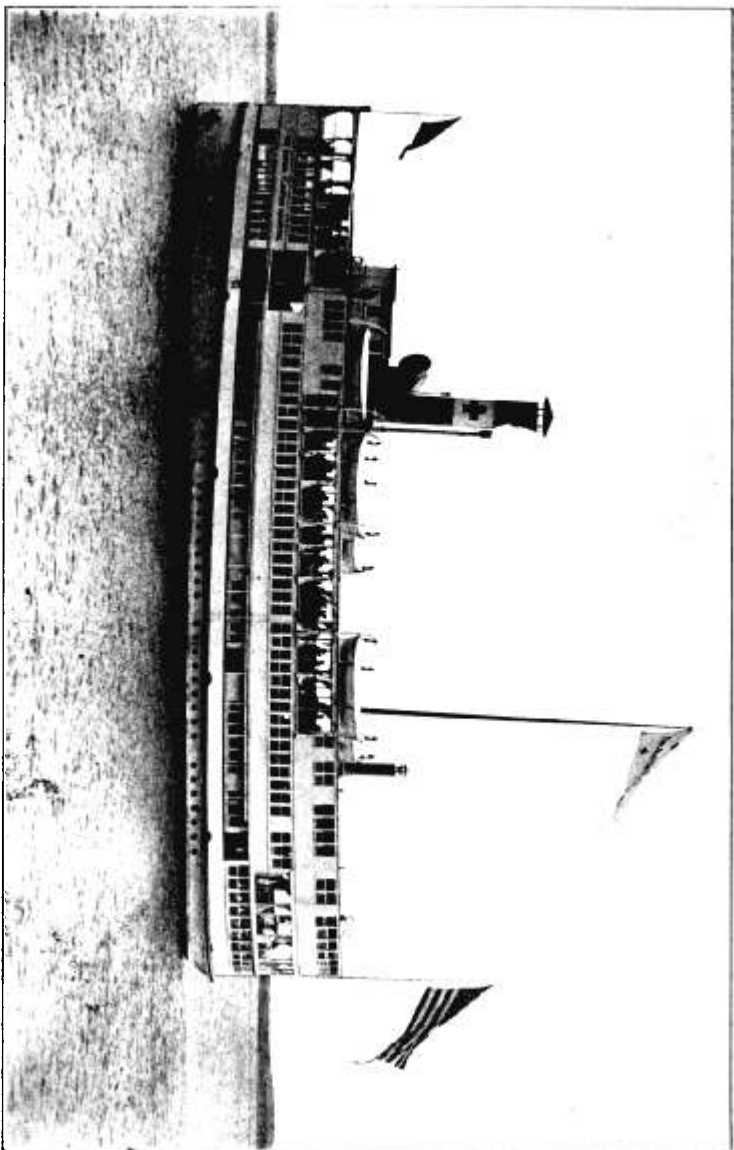
THE nursing profession is doubtless familiar with the Boston Floating Hospital, but it may be interesting to give a brief outline of the work as done in this institution.

The Boston Floating Hospital is conducted like any other good hospital. It has a board of trustees, a visiting staff, an auxiliary staff, a resident physician, a house staff, several medical assistants, and between forty and fifty graduate nurses. It cares for and treats children under six years of age. There are six permanent wards, each containing sixteen beds, and a spacious deck, where the out-patient work is conducted. On this deck one hundred and fifty patients may be accommodated. In this out-patient ward the patients are brought by their mothers or caretakers, and stay for the day, going to their homes at night. The work in this department does, perhaps, not seem as satisfactory as in the permanent wards; but the mothers receive instructions regarding the food and treatment the babies are to have at night, and usually these instructions are followed quite faithfully.

The hospital boat makes daily trips down the harbor during the months of July, August, and September, thus covering those summer months which are so baneful to children, especially those under five years of age, and so dreaded by mothers forced by necessity to live in the tenement districts of the hot cities. Very likely it is impossible for us to fully realize what the Floating Hospital means to this class of people—for the majority of our patients come to us from these crowded tenement districts. 'Tis sadly true that many of these cases come too late for recovery. Frequently, however, one of these desperate cases recovers, and it is then that the work seems doubly worth while.

The complaints treated are mostly under the list of intestinal diseases, and although there are many others treated—surgical, tubercular, marasmic, etc.—the chief object of the Boston Floating Hospital is to treat the diseases so prevalent during the summer months.

The season of 1906 was to be an eventful one in the history of the Boston Floating Hospital. The new boat was to be in commission, and although there was some delay on account of a steel strike during the winter, it was hoped that it would be possible to start the season on the new boat, for which we had waited so long and patiently. But the date of its completion could not be definitely determined, and little patients



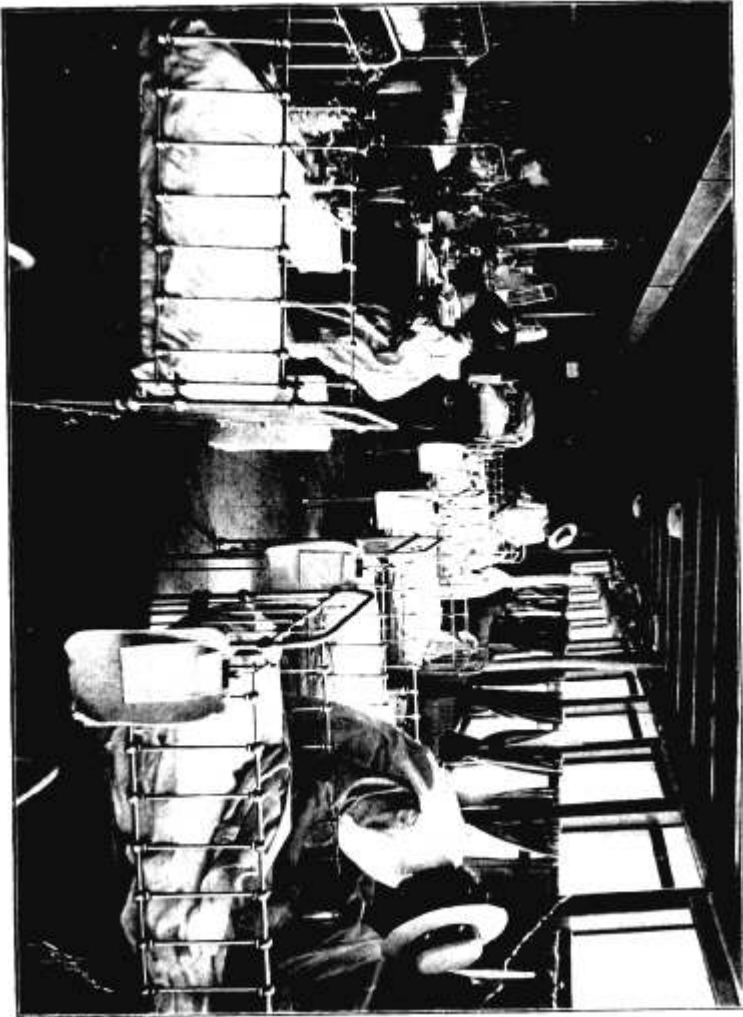
The New Heat

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On Deck.

UoP 34



The Ward



Food Laboratory.

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waiting to be admitted made it necessary to start the season on the old hospital boat (barge *Clifford*), so the first trip was made July 11. From the beginning the season promised to be a busy one, and although there was some disappointment when it was learned that the new boat could not be ready for some days, both the house staff and the nurses proved their willingness to help in every possible way, and showed the usual interest in their work—which at first seems hard, on account of its newness. The work is very different in comparison with usual hospital work, for the patients are very sick babies, most of them under two years of age. Needless to say that the work is very interesting, and, while tedious until one becomes accustomed to it, it is very fascinating and pleasant almost from the beginning. The spirit of congeniality is one of the Boston Floating Hospital features. Nurses from almost every state meet as absolute strangers, and are here offered an opportunity to give full scope to that broadness which nurses as a rule acquire, and in a very short time, working unitedly in this labor of love, a general feeling of good-fellowship is established.

This hospital offers a post-graduate course to nurses, lasting approximately ten weeks, and including eleven lectures by the visiting staff, instructions in the wards and food laboratory, an examination at the close of the season, and a diploma, the necessary requirements for the same being proficient ward work and a satisfactory mark on the written examination.

For the season of 1906 the nurses were organized as follows: Miss L. A. Wilber, superintendent (address 362 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston); Miss C. A. Brown, night matron; four Boston Floating Hospital graduates who acted as head nurses, and thirty-eight nurses taking the course.

The following received diplomas: Lucie E. Bartram, Elizabeth General Hospital, Elizabeth, New Jersey, 1906; Marion A. Burns, Lutheran Hospital, St. Louis, 1903; Dora B. Batson, Parker Memorial of State University, Missouri, 1905; Jane Callaghan, St. Luke's, Duluth, Minnesota, 1903; Minnie L. Campbell, Springfield Hospital, Massachusetts, 1902; V. Florence Dunbar, New Hampshire Memorial Hospital, Concord, New Hampshire, 1906; Daisy D. Davis, Danville Hospital, Danville, Illinois, 1900; Sarah A. Egan, Brooklyn Homœopathic, 1899; Lena E. Fisher, Westboro Hospital, 1906; Ida Farmer, Mary Fletcher Hospital, Burlington, Vermont, 1903; Frances M. Hostetter, St. Joseph's Hospital, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1905; Mary Louise Haynes, Mary Fletcher Hospital, Burlington, Vermont, 1902; (Mrs.) Mary A. Haines, City Hospital, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1904; Lydia B. James, Far-

rand T. S. Harper Hospital, Detroit, Michigan, 1905; Elise A. Jecko, Garfield Memorial, Washington, District of Columbia, 1905; Caroline E. Kineriem, St. Barnabas Hospital, Minneapolis, 1902; Annie F. Lockhart, Chipman Memorial Hospital, Canada, 1904; M. Gertrude Murdock, Fall River Hospital, Massachusetts, 1899; Anna F. McDerby, New Hampshire Memorial Hospital, Concord, New Hampshire, 1906; Sally A. Pew, Bishop T. S. House of Mercy, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1905; Elizabeth Paul, St. Joseph's Hospital, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1905; (Mrs.) Emma Richardson, Lynn Hospital, Massachusetts, 1903; Grace Snively, Farrand T. S. Harper Hospital, Detroit, Michigan, 1905; Marion B. Story, Bishop T. S. House of Mercy, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, 1898; Minnie E. Surbray, City Hospital, Akron, Ohio, 1905; Mary Tasman, Lynn Hospital, Lynn, Massachusetts, 1903; Sara Cameron Watts, City Hospital, Cortland, New York, 1905; Gertrude Holmes, Newton Hospital, Massachusetts, 1905; Cecelia Lemner, Carney Hospital, Massachusetts, 1906; Florence B. Hinckley, Adams Nervine, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, 1906; Beatrice H. Mack, W. C. C. Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, 1906; Marie R. Henchman, City Hospital, Albany, New York, 1904; Alice C. McArdle, Grant Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, 1903; Anna M. Streamer, State Hospital, Buffalo, New York, 1895; Mary E. Cummings, State Hospital, Concord, New Hampshire, 1906; Margaret N. Reilly, St. Vincent's Hospital, New York, 1906; Maud W. Miller, Homœopathic Hospital, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

This season was an unusual one in many ways. The weather was very favorable, there being but two days during the season when the usual trip down the harbor was prevented on account of heavy fogs.

August 14 was to be "moving day," for the new boat was now ready for occupancy. The *Clifford*, which had served as a hospital for twelve years, was to be deserted, and although we were indeed grateful for the beautiful new boat, we could not help feeling somewhat sad to leave the old one, with which we associated so many hours, both arduous and pleasant. The packing was done during the day, and the babies were given numbers designating the ward and bed to which they would be transferred. Everything was put in readiness, so that when Doctor Hastings's order came "to move" there would be as little confusion as possible.

The *Clifford* made its last trip down the harbor on this day, returning rather earlier than usual. At 3 p.m., when nearing East Boston, we saw the new Boston Floating Hospital leaving the Atlantic Works, and being towed over to North End Pier, Boston, which was to be its new abiding place. No doubt we all gave a silent cheer, for she presented

a beautiful spectacle indeed, in her snowy white robe and decoration of flags. The *Clifford* was towed alongside, and when Dr. Hastings said "go ahead," in less than one hour every patient was in its new home, and also many new ones, who had been waiting to be admitted, for there were not beds nor room enough on the *Clifford* to supply the demand, especially during August, when the weather was very oppressive. In a few days all the available beds found occupants, and even then, with all these extra beds for permanent patients, there were not enough to meet the demand, and it became necessary to form a permanent ward on the out-patient deck. This ward contained thirty patients, making a total of one hundred and thirty permanent patients, and many days one hundred day-patients in the out-patient department, so the new boat was immediately taxed to its utmost capacity, surely proving its urgent need.

On August 15 the new Boston Floating Hospital made its initial trip. It was indeed a gala day. Every boat saluted us, many going out of their way to pass us, and we were justly proud of our beautiful new vessel, the first and only one ever designed and built for a hospital boat.

The season closed September 15th, when patients in fair condition were sent to their respective homes, and cases where this was not considered advisable were transferred to hospitals. September 17, 18, and 19, the new boat was thrown open for public inspection. Visitors were welcomed by Manager Briggs and some of the physicians and nurses, they in turn conducting parties through the various wards, operating-room, treatment room, pharmacy, laboratories, dining-rooms, kitchen, and store rooms. Questions were willingly answered, interesting features pointed out, and explanations given concerning the work of the floating hospital. There were over 1300 visitors in these few days, the same including many prominent people of Boston and its vicinity. All seemed very much pleased, some proving their interest in a substantial way, and the universal opinion expressed was to the effect that this is a noble work which is carried on so faithfully on this White Ship of Mercy.

EXERCISE both muscles and mind, then note results.

WE should be trying to find out not in what we differ from other people, but in what we agree with them.—*Ruskin*.